

GATAFALQUE

DRAWER 15

BURIAL

71 2009 085 03872

The Assassination of Abraham Lincoln

Catafalque

Excerpts from newspapers and other
sources

From the files of the
Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection

Architect Henry Lord Gay of San Diego Recalls His Unique Experience

Interesting reminiscences of the final funeral ceremonies held over the body of Abraham Lincoln in Chicago are recalled by Henry Lord Gay, the well-known local architect, by the interest manifested throughout the country in the celebration of the one-hundredth anniversary of the great emancipator's birthday. Mr. Gay was the designer of the catafalque under which the body of Lincoln rested in state while in Chicago.

"The approaching anniversary of Lincoln's birthday, which will be universally honored throughout the country, is arousing more than usual interest in the event," said Mr. Gay last night. "As my former home in Chicago there is to be a large demonstration, while in almost every town there is to be special services and gatherings. The interest created at this time recalls to my mind my experience at the final obsequies of Lincoln.

"I was a young draftsman in the office of John M. Van Osdel, architect, at the time of the assassination of the president. A citizens' organization had charge of the preparation for the funeral ceremonies when the body should pass through Chicago. Every civic and military organization within a radius of many miles came to Chicago, and in the funeral procession about 50,000 were in line.

Hurry Order for Catafalque

"The body was to rest in the rotunda of the court house, and only within three days of the time set for the funeral had it occurred to the committee that nothing definite had been arranged to prepare a suitable catafalque for the occasion. A representative of the committee rushed into Mr. Van Osdel's office to place the responsibility on his shoulders to have this structure ready in time.

"I was called in, as a designer, to see what could be done in such short time. We were having some columns made of a light pattern for a special purpose, which had in relief an ivy vine twining up the column. This I proposed as the four standards. The shaft of the columns in black, the stem and leaves of the ivy in white. There was much interest in Gothic architecture at this time, and I proposed an ogival canopy, and, using black and white ostrich plumes to make the Gothic finish of the balance, carried out in black broadcloth and drapery accessories of tassels, cords, rosettes, etc. The general effect is about as shown in the hastily made pencil sketch.

"We had no electric lights in those days, but we had gas, and a corrugated mercury back reflector of very considerable power. I located one of these under the ogival roof and formed a ceiling of black broadcloth through which were cut many stars, the openings filled with transparent vellum cloth. The light was of ample volume and soft.

Floral decorations helped

"I depended much on the floral decorations to help out, and in this I was not disappointed, for the ladies' committee that had charge of the general decorations, aided in diverting attention from any shortcomings my design may have contained.

"I have at this time the printed pass that permitted me to go anywhere. It reads:

"The Press"
Funeral of President Lincoln
in Chicago,
Monday and Tuesday, May 1 and
2, 1865.
Officers on guard duty will pass
the bearer anywhere.
(Signed) R. M. HOUGH,
Chief Marshal.

"I was 'on duty' at the time the casket was brought in and laid upon the chairs. The embalmer who had come with the body from Washington, was to prepare the face for public view. The great generals of the army and many prominent federal officials were in the rotunda, and some had gathered about the catafalque.

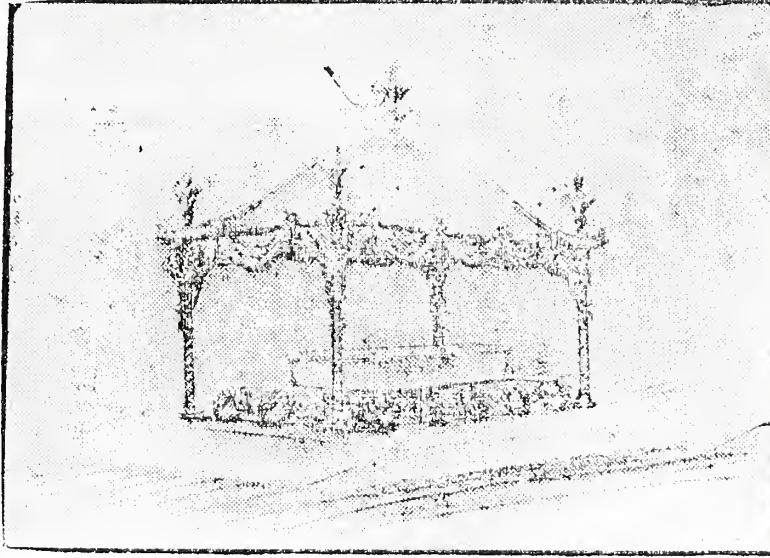
Refused to Open Casket


"The embalmer refused to open the casket until they had all retired. All did but General Ben Butler, and he refused to move, but was later persuaded to change his mind. I was left undisturbed and saw the face of Lincoln before the art of the embalmer was applied to restore the complexion and the features. It was the work of half an hour when the transformation was complete.

"The destructive hand of death's decay was temporarily arrested, and Lincoln's face appeared like one who had but just passed away. For two long days and late into the nights a steady stream of people passed on each side to view the face of Lincoln. It is among the most interesting and one of the saddest reminiscences of my life."

Designed Catafalque For State Funeral of Lincoln

Pen sketch drawn by Architect Henry Lord Gay for the Union of the Catafalque as he remembers it upon which the body of Abraham Lincoln lay in state in Chicago before the final burial ceremonies and which Mr. Gay designed at short notice





Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2012 with funding from
Friends of The Lincoln Collection of Indiana, Inc.

<http://archive.org/details/assassinationofacatlinc>

February 8, 1935.

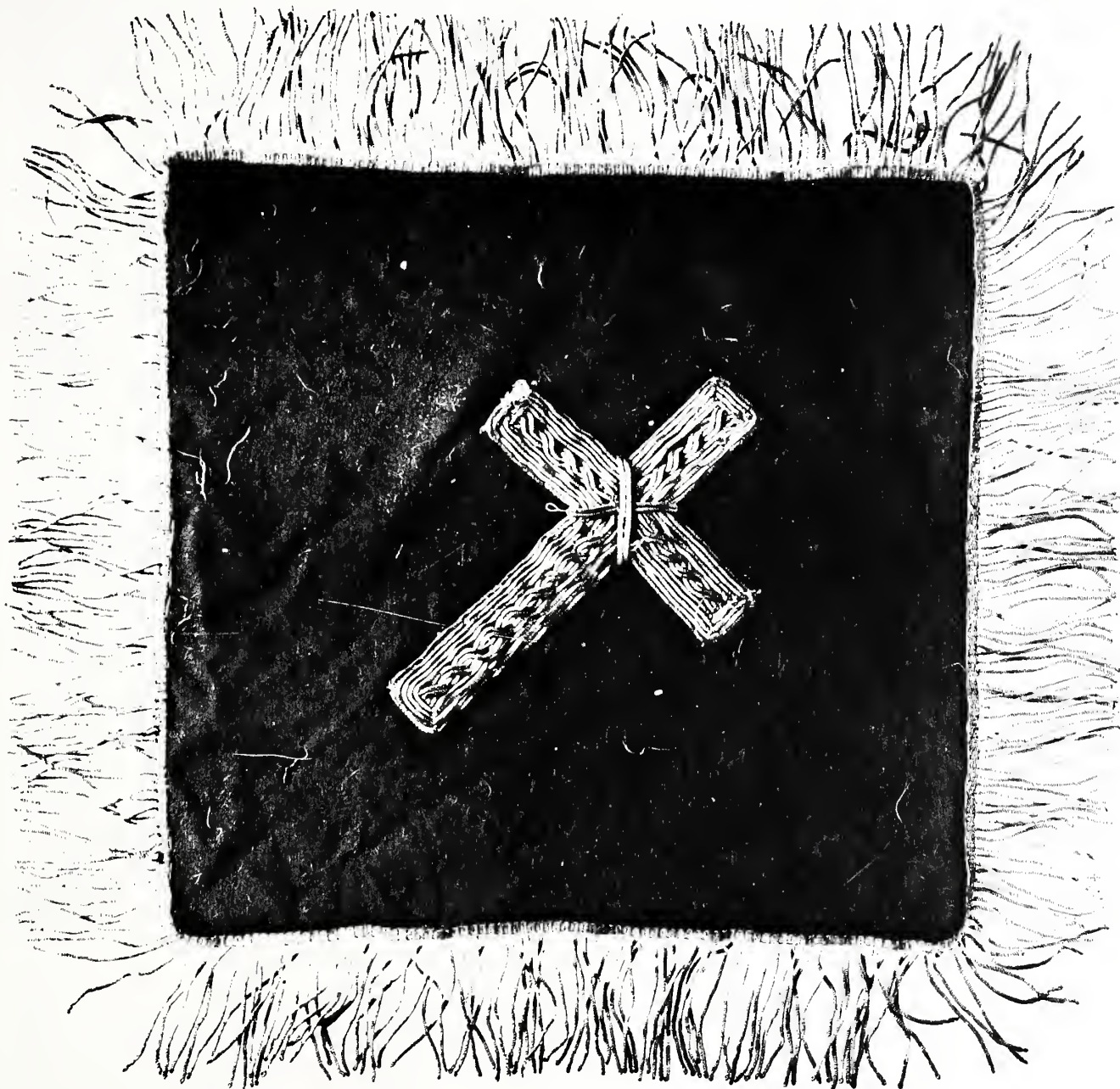
Lincoln Lore,
Fort Wayne, Indiana.

Gentlemen:

The accompanying photograph is a picture of a scarf taken from President Lincoln's catafalque. It has been in the possession of my family since around 1865. I wish to place this valuable memento of the martyred President where it will be most appreciated. If you are interested, please communicate with -

Franklin L. Thatcher
Franklin L. Thatcher,
16 Washington Avenue,
Jefferson Park,
Alexandria, Va.

Incl.



Costa Rica

See Photo 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100

February 21, 1935

Mr. Franklin L. Thatcher
16 Washington Avenue
Jefferson Park
Alexandria, Virginia

Dear Mr. Thatcher:

We have received your letter and photograph concerning the scarf taken from President Lincoln's catafalque. Your photograph of this scarf appears very interesting and I am sure you have always valued it very highly. I have noticed in your letter that you wish to place this valuable memento in some collection where it will be appreciated. I assure you that we would like very much to have an item of this type to place in our collection.

Please let us hear from you in regard to the way in which you wish to dispose of this item.

Yours very truly,

Librarian
RGM:EB Lincoln National Life Foundation
R.G. McMurtry

3.

1. The first part of the document is a list of names and dates, which appears to be a record of some kind. The names are written in a cursive script, and the dates are in a more formal, printed style. The list is organized into columns, with names in the first column and dates in the second column.

2. The second part of the document is a series of handwritten notes or entries. These are written in a cursive script and are organized into paragraphs. The notes appear to be a continuation of the record or a separate set of observations.

3. The third part of the document is a series of handwritten notes or entries, similar to the second part. These are also written in a cursive script and are organized into paragraphs. The notes appear to be a continuation of the record or a separate set of observations.

4. The fourth part of the document is a series of handwritten notes or entries, similar to the previous parts. These are also written in a cursive script and are organized into paragraphs. The notes appear to be a continuation of the record or a separate set of observations.

5. The fifth part of the document is a series of handwritten notes or entries, similar to the previous parts. These are also written in a cursive script and are organized into paragraphs. The notes appear to be a continuation of the record or a separate set of observations.

1. $\frac{1}{2} \times \frac{1}{2} = \frac{1}{4}$
 2. $\frac{1}{2} \times \frac{1}{2} = \frac{1}{4}$
 3. $\frac{1}{2} \times \frac{1}{2} = \frac{1}{4}$
 4. $\frac{1}{2} \times \frac{1}{2} = \frac{1}{4}$
 5. $\frac{1}{2} \times \frac{1}{2} = \frac{1}{4}$
 6. $\frac{1}{2} \times \frac{1}{2} = \frac{1}{4}$
 7. $\frac{1}{2} \times \frac{1}{2} = \frac{1}{4}$
 8. $\frac{1}{2} \times \frac{1}{2} = \frac{1}{4}$
 9. $\frac{1}{2} \times \frac{1}{2} = \frac{1}{4}$
 10. $\frac{1}{2} \times \frac{1}{2} = \frac{1}{4}$

1942

Curio

March 22, 1935

Mr. Franklin L. Thatcher
16 Washington Avenue
Jefferson Park
Alexandria, Virginia.

Dear Mr. Thatcher:

We shall be glad to hear from you further concerning the Lincoln scarf which you wish to dispose of.

Please tell us the amount you are asking for this item.

Yours Very Truly

R. Gerald McMurtry Librarian
Lincoln National Life Foundation

Scarf from L. Catozalque

Alex. Va.

April 1, 1935

E. Gerald McMurtry,
Fort Wayne, Ind.

Dear Sir:

I am valuing the Lincoln scarf at \$300. If
you are still interested I will furnish affi-
davits as to the history of it.

Yours respectfully,

Franklin L. Thatcher

Franklin L. Thatcher,
16 Washington Avenue,
Jefferson Park,
Alex. Va.

AP
Rick May of New Port Richey, Fla., pauses to look at flag-draped coffin of unknown serviceman of the Vietnam War in Capitol Rotunda. More in centerfold.

Honor is the order of day

By FRANK JACKMAN

Washington (News Bureau)—Americans from every walk of life filed slowly through the Rotunda of the Capitol yesterday, paying last respects to the unknown serviceman of the Vietnam War. He will be buried today in a place of honor near the unidentified dead of the nation's other 20th-century conflicts.

The flag-draped coffin of the unknown serviceman has lain in state in the Capitol since Friday afternoon. Late this morning, it will be borne down the long steps to a horse-drawn caisson to be taken the three miles across the Potomac to Virginia and

the Tomb of the Unknowns at Arlington National Cemetery.

He will be laid to rest between the unknown heroes of World War II and the Korean conflict, at the foot of the 79-ton marble tomb that covers the remains of the unknown soldier of World War I.

Yesterday, tourists and veterans, young and old, some of them in casual clothes, others in old battle fatigues, passed in a steady stream by the coffin. According to Capitol police, the crowd appeared to equal the 2,100 an hour who passed through

the Rotunda during the daylight hours Saturday.

FOUR FLOREAL wreaths of red, white and blue flowers were perched on wire stands around the coffin. The wreaths were from President and Mrs. Reagan, the House and Senate and the Defense Department. The coffin sat atop a wooden catafalque built after the assassination of President Abraham Lincoln.

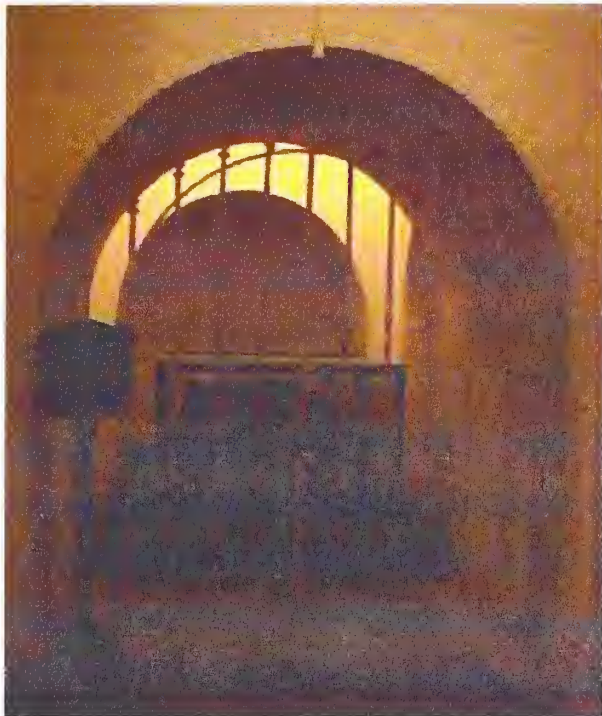
Although nearly 2,500 Americans still are unaccounted for in Southeast Asia, fewer than 200 unidentified bodies were found. By early this year,

Pentagon forensic scientists had identified all but two of them. The serviceman being honored this Memorial Day weekend is one of those two, and his remains are regarded as unidentified.

Reagan signed an executive order Friday awarding America's highest award for valor, the Medal of Honor, to the unknown serviceman as a tribute to 58,012 Americans who died in Vietnam. The medal will be formally presented by the President at Arlington today before the remains are interred.

The television networks plan live coverage today of the burial of the unknown serviceman of the Vietnam War at Arlington National Cemetery. Channels 2, 4 and 7 begin their coverage at 2 p.m.

AbrahamLincolnOnline.Org



Catafalque

Two floors below the Rotunda you can see the area intended as George and Martha Washington's tomb. However, they were buried at their plantation on the Potomac River. For many years the space held President Lincoln's catafalque -- the structure on which his coffin rested at the Rotunda in 1865. The catafalque has been moved to the new Capitol Visitor Center where it is displayed in a place of honor.

Benjamin French designed Lincoln's catafalque, which consisted simply of pine boards nailed together and covered with black broadcloth. Over the years the base and platform have been modified to accommodate the remains of dignitaries who lay in state in the Rotunda and nearby locations. The fabric has been replaced but its draping follows the 1865 style.

<Click on picture to continue.

[Back to Tour Home](#)

[Home](#) | [News](#) | [Books](#) | [Speeches](#) | [Places](#) | [Resources](#) | [Education](#) | [Index](#) | [Search](#)

Text and photo copyright © 2010 Abraham Lincoln Online. All rights reserved. [Privacy Policy](#)

ARCHITECT OF THE CAPITOL



The Catafalque

The catafalque was hastily constructed in 1865 to support the casket of Abraham Lincoln while the president's body lay in state in the Rotunda. The catafalque has since been used for all those who have lain in state in the Capitol Rotunda, as listed below. When not in use, the catafalque is kept in a specially constructed display area in the Exhibition Hall of the Capitol Visitor Center.



Related Links

[Those Who Have Lain in State](#)
[High-Res Images](#)

No law, written rule, or regulation specifies who may lie in state; use of the Rotunda is controlled by concurrent action of the House and Senate. Any person who has rendered distinguished service to the nation may lie in state if the family so wishes and Congress approves. In the case of unknown soldiers, the president or the appropriate branch of the armed forces initiates the action.

Senators and representatives have lain in state on the catafalque elsewhere in the Capitol, and Chief Justice Salmon P. Chase was placed on the catafalque in the Supreme Court Room in the Capitol on May 11, 1873. The catafalque has been used in the Supreme Court Building for the lying in repose of former Chief Justice Earl Warren on July 11–12, 1974; former Justice Thurgood Marshall, January 27, 1993; former Chief Justice Warren Earl Burger, June 28, 1995; former Justice William J. Brennan, Jr., July 28, 1997; Justice Harry A. Blackmun, March 8, 1999; and Chief Justice William Rehnquist, September 6–7, 2005. It was also used in the Department of Commerce building on April 9–10, 1996, for the lying in state of Secretary of Commerce Ronald H. Brown.

The catafalque is a simple bier of rough pine boards nailed together and covered with black cloth. Although the base and platform have occasionally been altered to accommodate the larger size of modern coffins and for the ease of the attending military personnel, it is basically the same today as it was in Lincoln's time. Presently the catafalque measures 7 feet 1 inch (216 cm) long, 2 feet 6 inches (76 cm) wide, and 2 feet (61 cm) high. The attached base is 8 feet 10 inches (269 cm) long, 4 feet 3-1/2 inches (131 cm) wide, and 2 inches (5 cm) high. The platform is 11 feet 1 inch (338 cm) long, 6 feet (183 cm) wide, and 9-1/4 inches (23.5 cm) high. Although the cloth covering the catafalque has been replaced several times, the style of the drapery is similar to that used in 1865.

A list of those who have lain in state on the catafalque in the Capitol Rotunda appears below; **[a list of all persons who have lain in state or in honor in the Rotunda is also available.](#)**

Name	Lay in State
Abraham Lincoln	April 19-21, 1865
Thaddeus Stevens	August 13-14, 1868
Charles Sumner	March 13, 1874
Henry Wilson	November 25-26, 1875
James Abram Garfield	September 21-23, 1881
John Alexander Logan	December 30-31, 1886
William McKinley, Jr.	September 17, 1901
Pierre Charles L'Enfant (re-interment)	April 28, 1909
George Dewey	January 20, 1917
Unknown Soldier of World War I	November 9-11, 1921
Warren Gamaliel Harding	August 8, 1923
William Howard Taft	March 11, 1930
John Joseph Pershing	July 18-19, 1948
Robert Alphonso Taft	August 2-3, 1953
Unknown Soldiers of World War II and the Korean War	May 28-30, 1958
John Fitzgerald Kennedy	November 24-25, 1963
Douglas MacArthur	April 8-9, 1964

Herbert Clark Hoover	October 23-25, 1964
Dwight David Eisenhower	March 30-31, 1969
Everett McKinley Dirksen	September 9-10, 1969
J. Edgar Hoover	May 3-4, 1972
Lyndon Baines Johnson	January 24-25, 1973
Hubert Horatio Humphrey	January 14-15, 1978
Unknown Soldier of Vietnam Era	May 25-28, 1984
Claude Denson Pepper	June 1-2, 1989
Ronald Wilson Reagan	June 9-11, 2004
Gerald R. Ford, Jr.	December 30, 2006–January 2, 2007

Architect of the Capitol | Washington, DC 20515

[Home](#) | [Employment](#) | [Virtual Capitol](#) | [Contact AOC](#) | [Privacy Statement](#)



